the standard of education. In the Eighth Five-Year Plan, as I told you within one kilometre ....

DR. R. K. PODDAR : I have asked about this year's Budget. Are you going to ....

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, the Budget is not in my hands. But, about the 'Operation Blackboard', I am stating .....

MR. CHAIRMAN : You have passed the Budget.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : .... that up to 1991 ....

DR. R. K. PODDAR : There should be a Supplementary Budget.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : If the Member raises it for us, I will be very grateful.

Sir, up to 1991, we have sanctioned Rs. 699 crores for the 'Operation Blackboard'. And we have already started 1.43 lakh schools for 'Operation Blackboard'.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question No. 162.

Iron ore deposits in Tamil Nadu

*162. SHRI S. MADHAVAN : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the high quality iron ore available in Tamil Nadu has been tested for industrial use, if so, what are the details thereof ;

(b) what is the quantity of iron ore available in the State as assessed by feasibility reports ; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government to exploit the iron ore deposits available in that State for industrial porposes ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV) : (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The iron ores of Tamil Nadu are not high grade, but low grade magnetite quartzites with an average Fe content ranging between 35—37%. Tests have shown that these ores are amenable for beneficiation and concentration.

(b) In the early 60's, the possibility of using ore from Kanjamalai (Solem District) was investigated in connection with the proposed Salem steel project, and the mineable reserves were estimated at about 75 million tonnes.

The State Government have also carried out exploration for iron ore in some parts of the State. However, no firm estimates to prove recoverable reserves have been reported.

(c) As the ores are if low grade and costs involved in further processing are uneconomical, they have not been exploited for industrial use.

SHRI S. MADHAVAN : Sir, is it a fact that the Tamil Nadu Government appointed the Dastur & Company to examine this iron ore at Kanjamalai and has the Government got that report ? Sir, the Minister has admited that it is magnetite ore, compared to the other States which have got hematite. The Dastur & Company report has pointed out that this iron ore is amenable for beneficiation. What are the steps taken to utilise this ore, according to the report of the Dastur & Company ?

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : Sir, it is a fact that the Dastur & Company was appointed when this Salem steel plant was envisaged. And the report had come. Unfortunately, the type of iron ore that is available there was not found to be commercialy viable for use in the integrated steel plants. And only yesterday we got the information that the State Government have recently made some studies on this. And they have given some figures. About 530 million tonnes of iron ore is available. But it is not the type of iron ore that is needed for the integrated steel plants because the Fe content is 35 to 37

per cent. If you want to make it viable for the integrated steel plant, the cost involved is such that it is not economically viable. That is why till now we have not taken any step. But the State Government may try to have the pellet plants because the pellets can be utilised. And we are now having a task force on the basis of their recommendation we will interact with different State Governments to see how the minerals, the iron ore and other things, can be used.

SHRI S. MADHAVAN : There is a strong feeling that Central Government is neglecting Tamil Nadu State in the matter of industrial investment and the Central investment is being reduced. When our revered leader Indiraji inaugurated the Salem Steel Plant she promised to use Kanjamalai ore. What steps have been taken by the Central Government to make the Salem Steel Plant as a full-fledged steel plant ? The Government of India is selling iron ore. Even recently they have sold iron ore at a reduced price to Japan. Why not use this Kanjamalai iron ore ? The Minister has not answered about the Dastur and Company report. The former Industry Minister, Mr. R. Venkataraman, had prepared a report with the help of Dastur and Company. The opinion given by the Minister had been contradicted by Dastur and Company because haemetite ore is 65 per cent concentration and magnetite ore is 35 per cent concentration but it is easy to use magnetite ore. That is the finding of Dastur and Company. Is it a fact ? I want to know whether the Government will take action to put up a sponge iron plant which was also recommended by Dastur and Company, with this Kanjamalai ore ? I also want to know whether they are exploring any other area in Tamil Nadu for iron ore.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: It is not a fact that we are neglecting Tamil Nadu. But the present policy of the Government of India is not to have any public sector undertaking on steel. Delicensing has been done and any private party can come and start any plant in any State. The State Government is entitled to give clearance for various facilities such as Power/water etc. Only if it is within 25 Kms. from a particular city having a population of 10 lakhs or more and which is not in an already existing industrial area only then licence is needed.

Yes, there is a sponge iron plant coming up in Tamil Nadu in the private sector and I think in a year or two it will come into production.

We have not neglected Salem Steel Plant. We are using it for integration. Now a hot roll mill is being envisaged. An amount of Rs. 425 crores has been allotted and I think within the next 20 to 25 days, global tenders will be finalised and this particular plant will come into being.

Now we are sending H.R. coils for converting into C.R. coil abrord and then we are bringing it from outside. Now this itself will be done in the Salem Steel Plant. So we are definitely trying to upgrade and modernise the Salem Steel Plant and I assure the hon. Member that our efforts will be there and there is no question of neglecting Tamil Nadu.

SHRI SUNIL BASU RAY : In view of part (a) of the reply, I want to know from the Government whether they are going to further explore the possibility of utilising these ores because in our country such ores are available in plenty. Unless we utilise them here, we will not be able to prove ourselves to our task. So I want to know from the Government whether they are going to have any crash programme for utilising these ores.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : Recently, as our hon. Prime Minister declared, our intention is to see that more iron ore is utilised within the country and value-added product goes out of the country. Keeping that in view, we have decided that those ores which are needed within the country will not be exported at all. We will of course have to honour the existing contracts .

Yes, as I said, the task firce has analysed all this and we are trying to see that more iron ore is used. We have already

delicensed pig iron as well as sponge iron industry. For example in Goa, two new pig iron plants are coming up, one by Sesagoa and another by Usha Rectifiers. In West Bangal, Tatas have started one plant and we have come to know that in Madhya Pradesh also, Mukund is going to start another plant.. ESSAR is expanding. So, the policy which has been changed, has been well-received by the State Governments and by the private sector.

The hon. Member is quite right that our effort is to be see that more and more iron ore is utilised within the country so that we can produce more steel.

SHRI M. PALANIYANDI : Sir, the hon. Minister has not answered about the sponge iron plant. Since we have shortage of sponge iron in our country, we are importing, what is called scrap from abroad. Therefore. I would like to know whether the Government is contemplating to set up a sponge iron plant with the Kanjamalai ore.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : As I said, we are not expanding, or, setting up any new plant. If any private sector comes, they can do it. It is up to the State Government. We shall render all help.

SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VENKATRAMAN : Sir, the hon. Minister in his reply to part (a) of the question has said 'The iron ores of Tamil Nadu are not high grade, but low grade magnetite quartzites ....' Why can't we use there quartzites ? it is a hot sell. There is a very good market for quartz and other things. Why can't this be used ?

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : As I said, the iron content in this type of iron ore is only 35—37 per cent. To have a viable plant, to have a viable integrated steel plant, you have to have a minimum of 62 per cent. The cost involved in beneficiating low grade ore is 325 odd Perton whereas, the price of raw iron ore (of 65% Fe) in the market is Rs. 145/ton. The cost for upgrading low grade ore is very high. I have said, based on the demand for pellets in the international market which is expected to grow a pellents plant can be started. We have to see that the Central and the State Governments together take a step. Actually, when I was having the briefing meeting today, I instructed them to go into this question and see how this iron ore, which is available in Tamil Nadu, can be utilised. We shall definitely consider this question.

SHRI M. VINCENT : What is the minimum percentage of iron content in the iron ore in Indian mines which are now being smelted, or, otherwise being exported ? I would like to know whether the Government has explored and identified concentrated pockets in the Kanjamalai ore area ? If not, will the Government undertake satellite imaging to pinpoint the concentrated Pockets to enable the original project to be implemented?

Part (b) of my question is, after decontrol of steel distribution, the States which are for away from the steel plants are going to be affected. Recently, the price equalisation schemes has also been withdrawn. This will also affect industries, particularly, in Tamil Nadu, where there are more engineering industries. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what steps are being taken to supply steel to the industries which are situated far away from the steel plants.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : In regard to the first part of the question of the hon. Member, I have already replied. I would repeat it. The highest iron content, the best quality available, is from the Bailadilla iron ore. It is 65 per cent.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You are exporting it to Japan ?

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : Part of it. Part of it is also used for our Vizag plant. As to why it was done, Mr. Subramanian Swamy can answer it better than me because it was in his time that the contract was signed. The Goa iron ore has on average Fe content of 62% or lower. But it is not so much used in the country.

More or less hundred per cent of the Goa iron ore is going for export, to countries like Japan, Korea, etc. But as I said, we are concentrating to see that we export value added products. This is our intention.

The hon. Member asked about the steel decontrol and the withdrawal of the freight equalisation scheme. Yes. The freight equlisation scheme has been withdrawn. But at the same time, in regard to the States which are far away from the steel plants, for example, in the South,—whatever that we were charging in the past,—956 old—we are, still, continuing to charge the same, i.e. 956. It is not a fact that the small-scale industries and others in the South are affected. It is a fact that there were memoranda from various industries' organisations. We have, in our new guidelines, maintained the previous policy of giving steel and steel products to the small-scale industries. The JPC was the body monitoring it. Even now, they are monitoring it. I can assuer the House that no small-scale industry in any State would suffer. The previous policy will be there and steel materials will be made available to them.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question No. 163.

स्कूल स्तर पर पढ़ाई छोड़ देने वाले बच्चों की दर

*163. **सरदार जगजीत सिंह अरोड़ा :** †

श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज :

क्या मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या सरकार का ध्यान 24 अप्रैल, 1992 के इंडियन एक्सप्रेस में "लिटरेसी फार आल स्टिल रिमेन्स ड्रीम" शीर्षक से प्रकाशित समाचार की ओर दिलाया गया है, यदि हां, तो क्या यह सच है कि एक से कक्षा पांच के बीच 46 प्रतिशत और एक से कक्षा आठ के बीच 62 प्रतिशत बच्चे पढ़ाई छोड़ देते हैं,

(ख) क्या सरकार ने प्राथमिक व माध्यमिक शिक्षा को रुचिकर तथा उपयोगी बनाने के लिए तथा शिक्षा पद्धति में ऐसे परिवर्तन करने के लिए कोई प्रयास किया है जिससे कि स्कूलों में बच्चे पढ़ाई न छोड़ें; और

(ग) यदि हां, तो इस बारे में सरकार की भावी योजना क्या है ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS) WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT) (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE) : (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) A report of this kind had appeared in Indian Express Delhi Edition of April, 21, 1992.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) It is proposed to bring down dropout rate from 46% and 62% at primary and upper primary stage to 20% and 40% respectively by the end of the Eighth Plan. Following measures are proposed to achieve this target:

(i) Microplanning through a process of community participation and effective de-centralisation of educational management to the village level;

(ii) Shifting the emphasis on retention and learning by monitoring the number of children completing class V and class VIII and devising programme to ensure that the minimum levels of learning are achieved by all children completing a stage of education;

(iii) Expansion of facilities and improvement of primary and upper primary schools by expanding the scope of Operation Blackboard;

(iv) Diversification and improvement of programme of non-formal education

†सभा में यह प्रश्न सरदार जगजीत सिंह अरोड़ा द्वारा पूछा गया।